

IWA

**THE INTERNATIONAL
WORKERS' ASSOCIATION**



STATUTES

Updated January 2020

The Statutes of Revolutionary Unionism (IWA)

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of humankind is formed by the struggle between the exploiters and the exploited, which is currently manifested in the attacks of Capitalism and the State on the working class in all areas of life.

Capitalists, managers and politicians are organizing themselves to advance their interests as much as possible. If we want to stand up against them, advance our own interests and build the society which we desire, we have to overcome the weakness and disorganization of the workers' movement.

In order to achieve this, it is necessary to organize ourselves in a fighting structure which unites all revolutionary workers from all over the world. The actions of such an organization have to show that it is capable of overcoming Capitalism and the State.

A movement for emancipation built in this way cannot accept the line of action urged by those currents of the workers' movement that aspire to a harmony between capital and labour, desiring an international peace with Capitalism and incorporation into the State. Neither can it accept those currents that propagate the existence of the state or the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is contrary to our goal of a society based upon the greatest possible liberty and well-being for all.

Against the offensive of Capital and politicians of all hues, all the revolutionary workers of the world must build a real International Workers' Association, in which, each member will know that the emancipation of the working class will only be possible when the workers themselves, in their capacities as producers, manage to prepare themselves in their political-economic organizations to take possession of the land and the factories and enable themselves to administer them jointly, in such a way that they will be able to continue production and social life.

Considering this perspective and goal, the duty of the workers is to participate in all actions that lead towards a revolutionary transformation of society, always striving to move towards our final goals. We must make our strength felt through this participation, always striving to give our movement, through organization, action and propaganda, the necessary means to supplant our adversaries. Similarly, wherever possible, we must realize our social system through models and examples, and our organizations must exert, to the limits of their possibilities, the greatest possible influence on other tendencies in order that they can be incorporated into our struggle, which is the common struggle against all statist and capitalist adversaries, always keeping in mind the circumstances of place and time, but remaining faithful to the goals of the movement for workers' emancipation.

II THE PRINCIPLES OF REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

1. Revolutionary unionism, basing itself on the class struggle, aims to unite all workers in combative economic organizations, which fight to free themselves from the double yoke of capital and the State. Its goal is the reorganization of social life on the basis of Libertarian Communism via the revolutionary action of the working class. Since only the economic organizations of the proletariat are capable of achieving this objective, revolutionary unionism addresses itself to workers in their capacity as producers, creators of social wealth, to take root and develop amongst them, in opposition to the modern workers' parties, which it declares are incapable of the economic reorganization of society.

2. Revolutionary unionism is the staunch enemy of all social and economic monopoly, and aims at its abolition by the establishment of economic communities and administrative organs run by the workers in the field and factories, forming a system of free councils without subordination to any authority or political party, bar none. As an alternative to the politics of State and parties, revolutionary unionism posits the economic reorganization of production, replacing the rule of man over man with the administrative management of things. Consequently, the goal of revolutionary unionism is not the conquest of political power, but the abolition of all state functions in the life of society. Revolutionary unionism considers that along with the disappearance of the monopoly of property, must come the disappearance of the monopoly of domination; and that no form of State, however camouflaged, can ever be an instrument for human liberation, but that on the contrary, it will always be the creator of new monopolies and new privileges.

3. Revolutionary unionism has a two-fold function: to carry on the day-to-day revolutionary struggle for the economic, social and intellectual advancement of the working class within the limits of present-day society, and to educate the masses so that they will be ready to independently manage the processes of production and distribution when the time comes to take possession of all the elements of social life. Revolutionary unionism does not accept the idea that the organization of a social system based exclusively on the producing class can be ordered by simple governmental decrees and maintains that it can only be obtained through the common action of all manual and intellectual workers, in every branch of industry, by self-management of the workers, such that every group, factory or branch of industry is an autonomous member of the greater economic organism and systematically runs the production and distribution processes according to the interests of the community, on an agreed-upon plan and on the basis of mutual accord.

4. Revolutionary unionism is opposed to all organizational tendencies inspired by the centralism of State and Church, because these can only serve to prolong the survival of the State and authority and to systematically stifle the spirit of initiative and the independence of thought. Centralism is an artificial organization that subjects the so-called lower classes to those who claim to be superior, and that leaves in the hands of the few the affairs of the whole community - the individual being turned into a robot with controlled gestures and movements. In the centralized organization, society's good is subordinated to the interests of the few, variety is replaced by uniformity and personal responsibility is replaced by rigid discipline. Consequently, revolutionary unionism bases its social vision on a broad federalist organization; i.e., an organization stemming from the bottom up, the uniting of all forces in the defense of common ideas and interests.

5. Revolutionary unionism rejects all parliamentary activity and all collaboration with legislative bodies; because it knows that even the freest voting system cannot bring about the disappearance of the clear contradictions at the core of present-day society and because the parliamentary system has only one goal: to lend a pretense of legitimacy to the reign of falsehood and social injustice.

6. Revolutionary Unionism rejects all political and national frontiers, which are arbitrarily created, and declares that so-called nationalism is just the religion of the modern state, behind which is concealed the material interests of the propertied classes. Revolutionary unionism recognizes only economic differences, whether regional or national, that produce hierarchies, privileges and every kind of oppressions (because of race, sex and any false or real difference), and in the spirit of solidarity claims the right to self-determination for all economic groups.

7. For the identical reason, revolutionary unionism fights against militarism and war. Revolutionary unionism advocates anti-war propaganda and the replacement of standing armies, which are only the instruments of counter-revolution at the service of capitalism, by workers' militias, which, during the revolution, will be controlled by the workers' unions; it demands, as well, the boycott and embargo of all raw materials and products necessary for war, with the exception of a country where the workers are in the midst of social revolution, in which case we should help them defend the revolution. Finally, revolutionary unionism advocates the preventive and revolutionary general strike as a means of opposing war and militarism.

8. Revolutionary unionism recognizes the need of a production that does not damage the environment, and that tries to minimize the use of non-renewable resources and uses, whenever possible, renewable alternatives. It does not admit ignorance as the origin of the present-day environmental crisis, but the thirst for earnings. Capitalist production always seeks to minimize costs in order to get more earnings to survive, and it is unable to protect the environment. To sum up, the world debt crisis has sped up the tendency to commercial harvest to the detriment of subsistence agriculture. This fact has produced the destruction of the tropical forest, starvation and disease. The fight to save our planet and the fight to destroy capitalism must be joint or both of them will fail.

9. Revolutionary unionism asserts itself to be a supporter of the method of direct action, and aids and encourages all struggles that are not in contradiction to its own goals. Its methods of struggle are: strikes, boycotts, sabotage, etc. Direct action reaches its deepest expression in the general strike, which should also be, from the point of view of revolutionary unionism, the prelude to the social revolution.

10. While revolutionary unionism is opposed to all organised violence regardless of the kind of government, it realizes that there will be extremely violent clashes during the decisive struggles between the capitalism of today and the free communism of tomorrow. Consequently, it recognizes as valid that violence may be used as a means of defense against the violent methods used by the ruling classes during the struggles that lead up to the revolutionary populace expropriating the lands and means of production. As this expropriation can only be carried out and brought to a successful conclusion by the direct intervention of the workers' revolutionary economic organizations, defense of the revolution must also be the task of these economic organizations and not of a military or quasi-military body developing independently of them.

11. Only in the economic and revolutionary organizations of the working class are there forces capable of bringing about its liberation and the necessary creative energy for the reorganization of society on the basis of libertarian communism.

III. NAME OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The international bond of struggle and solidarity that unites the revolutionary unionist organizations of the world is called the International Workers' Association (IWA).

IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE I.W.A.

The IWA has the following objectives:

To organize and press for revolutionary struggle in all countries with the aim of destroying once and for all the present political and economic régimes and to establish Libertarian Communism.

To give the economic unionist organizations a national and industrial base and, where that already exists, to strengthen those organizations which are determined to fight for the destruction of capitalism and the State.

To prevent the infiltration of any political parties into the economic unionist organizations and to resolutely fight every attempt by political parties to control unions.

Where circumstances demand it, to establish through a course of action that is not in contradiction with a), b), and c), provisional alliances with other proletarian, union and revolutionary organizations, with the objective of planning and carrying out common international actions in the interest of the working class. Such alliances must never be with political parties, i.e., with organizations that accept the state as system of social organization. Revolutionary Unionism rejects the class collaboration that is characterized by the participation in committees organized under state corporate schemes (for example, in union elections for enterprise committees) and by the acceptance of subsidies, paid union professionals and other practices that can spoil anarchosyndicalism.

To unmask and fight the arbitrary violence of all governments against revolutionaries dedicated to the cause of the Social Revolution.

To examine all problems of concern to the world proletariat in order to strengthen and develop movements, in one country or several, which help to defend the rights and new conquests of the working class or to organize the revolution for emancipation itself.

To undertake actions of mutual aid in the event of important economic struggles or critical struggles against the overt or covert enemies of the working class.

To give moral and material help to the working class movements in each country in which the leadership of the struggle is in the hands of the national economic organization of the proletariat.

The International intervenes in the union affairs of a country only when its affiliated organization in that country requests it or when the affiliate violates the general principles of the International.

V. Conditions of affiliation

The following can affiliate to the IWA:

- National Revolutionary Syndicalist Organizations that do not belong to any other international. In every case only one section will exist in each country. The affiliated sections have to ratify the Principles, Tactics and Aims of the IWA, and send a copy of its Statutes and Principles to the Secretariat. The International Secretariat of the IWA will inform sections of the origin of the contact or contacts that have applied to affiliate.
- Minorities of Revolutionary syndicalists organized inside other national organizations affiliated to other trade union internationals.
- Union organizations, crafts, industrial or general that are independent or affiliated to national organisations that do not belong to the IWA, which accept the Declaration of Principles and Goals of the IWA.
- Every organization of revolutionary unionist propaganda that accepts the Declaration of Principles and Goals of the IWA and that works in a country where there is no national organization affiliated to the IWA.

Since the IWA only consists of legal or illegal sections, with direct connection within the respective countries, the only groups that can be recognized as Sections of the IWA are those exiled groups that can give clear evidence to the IWA-Secretariat that they are authentic representatives of organizations that act and work in the respective countries.

In any case only one Section will be able to exist for each country.

The following types of behaviour may lead to disaffiliation or suspension:

- Failure to comply with the Principles, Tactics and Aims of the IWA.
- Failure to pay affiliation fees. If a Section fails to pay its fees for a year, the Congress will have to consider the Sections' disaffiliation.
- If a Section does not attend meetings and Congresses of the International, nor responds to requests for contact by the Secretariat of the IWA nor by the Sections, without explanation.

Affiliation and disaffiliation takes place at IWA Congress. A Section may disaffiliate itself from the IWA in the period between Congresses.

Suspension can be agreed during a Plenary or Congress based on a previous motion, or by referendum if a Plenary or Congress agrees.

A Section can be suspended for reasons of non-compliance with the Statutes or action against the agreements of Congress or the interest of the IWA. To be accorded by a motion and decision of the Sections.

Membership may be suspended because of a split or confusion as to whether a Section still remains, pending an investigation by a commission.

If a Section is not in good standing (fails to pay its dues for a year), but the Congress decided not to disaffiliate it, the Section may be suspended.

Suspension means that the Section does not have voting rights at Congresses, Plenaries or in referenda, nor the right to submit motions. It maintains the same rights as Friends of the IWA to receive documents, attend all Congresses and to give opinions.

If a Section remains suspended for some period of time, Congress may decide to change its status to Friends, upon such a motion.

VI. The International Congresses

The International Congresses of the IWA are held every third year.

The Secretariat shall sufficiently in advance of the Congress ask the Sections for issues or suggestions to be dealt with by the Congress. The Secretariat shall then draw up the Agenda, which together with the motions that have been presented, shall be sent to the affiliated organizations at least six months before the Congress starts. Each Plenary or Congress is recorded and minutes are produced as faithfully as possible. The Minutes are subject to the approval of the Sections.

The agreements and resolutions adopted by the International Congresses are binding for all affiliated organizations, except when those organizations, by a resolution of a National Congress or by referendum, reject the agreements of the international Congress.

At the request of at least three national affiliated Organizations, an international agreement can be submitted for revision by a general referendum within all Sections.

In the international referendums and Congresses, every Section has one vote, and it is recommended that unanimity be sought before one proceeds to the voting.

VII. International transfer

Every member of an organization affiliated to the IWA that has paid all his/her affiliation fees, but who resides in a country other than the one in which s/he became affiliated, should no later than one month after his/her arrival carry out his/her transfer to the corresponding organization of the national organization affiliated to the IWA. This transfer must be approved by the said national organization without an entry registration contribution.

In the case of a forced massive exile, the affiliation is voluntary if there exists an affiliation to an exiled organization recognized by the IWA.

VIII. The Secretariat

To coordinate the international activities of the IWA, to obtain and to organize accurate information regarding the propaganda and the struggle in all of the countries, to implement in the best manner the resolutions of the international Congresses and to take care of all of IWA's work, a Secretariat is elected consisting of at least three persons, from one or more Sections. The Section(s) holding the Secretariat is (or are) chosen by the Congress or by international referendum. Usually the Secretariat is held by one Section but this task may be shared. The Secretary General, Treasurer and any other members will be chosen by those who hold the Secretariat. The members of the Secretariat shall distribute the tasks and work amongst themselves. They may also delegate certain tasks to other Sections.

Members of political parties may not hold any responsible positions in the IWA.

The Secretariat is elected as indicated above for the period from one regular Congress to the next. The same Section(s) should only serve two terms consecutively. The Section(s) holding the Secretariat should rotate. The Secretariat may return to a Section which previously held it only after some period of rotation.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances where the Congress fails to elect a new Secretariat, it must agree on measures to be taken.

The Secretariat shall not take a salary or any personal payments for fulfilling its mandate.

The Secretariat shall provide periodic financial reports to the IWA. It is responsible for the distribution of written communication to all the Sections and Friends and for keeping proper records thereof. It must make a written report about its activities during the period between Congresses and Plenaries. The report must be presented sufficiently in advance to allow the affiliated Sections to acquaint themselves with it before the holding of the Congress and Plenary. At the same time, an administrative-economic report shall be presented and sent to the Sections. The Congress and Plenary shall name a commission which during the Congress and Plenary shall carry out an inspection of the accounts.

Vice-Secretariat

A Vice-Secretariat is also elected by Congress or by referendum. The Vice-Secretariat is only mandated to serve as a replacement for the Secretariat, in case it becomes totally inoperable or is recalled by the Sections. It is not mandated to represent the IWA or fulfill any other functions, unless these are tasks delegated by the Secretariat.

Recallability

The Secretariat may be recalled upon a referendum of the Sections of the IWA. In order to initiate the referendum, at least three Sections of the IWA must support a motion. Upon the motion supported by three Sections, a referendum must be announced immediately and the Sections have 90 days to vote.

In the event that the Secretariat does not commence the referendum process within one week (from the time the third Section supported the motion), the Vice-Secretariat should do so.

Should the Secretariat be recalled, the Vice-Secretariat should assume its role until the next Congress is held.

In special circumstances, the Vice-Secretariat must replace the Secretariat.

a) In cases of political repression, arrest, war or other force majeure events which make the execution of the position impossible.

In these cases, the Secretariat is not considered recalled, but replaced. If it is possible and feasible, the Secretariat may be later transferred back to that Section.

b) If the Secretariat has not functioned for a period of time over three months, not answering correspondence, calls or producing bulletins, or if it has failed to properly convoke the Congress or Plenary, without reason or agreement, causing it to be postponed for more than three months, the Vice-Secretariat should assume the functions of the Secretariat to ensure the proper functioning of the IWA.

Upon assumption of these duties, the Vice-Secretariat should inform the Sections and motion to recall the Secretariat by the referendum process described above.

IX. Finances

To allow the IWA to carry out and to strengthen its international activities and to give its written propaganda a solid foundation; to allow it to publish its periodic publications at regular intervals; to allow it to participate in all manifestations of the life of the revolutionary syndicalism in the different countries; to make it capable to promote the ideas of revolutionary syndicalism in countries where our ideas and tactics are scarcely represented; and, finally, to allow the IWA to respond satisfactorily and immediately to the calls for solidarity that it may receive, every member of an organization affiliated to the IWA shall pay monthly, as an international affiliation fee, the amount of one US dollar (1 US\$) or the equivalent amount in national currency, taking into consideration the exchange value in the countries concerned.

For those Sections that are in a difficult situation, the dues are established in agreement with the rest of the IWA.

Every affiliate Section shall decide by itself the procedure to be followed to receive the affiliation fee from their members. The IWA has a special seal for stamping the membership card for those Sections that would like to do so.

The affiliate Section shall send to the IWA the stipulated affiliation fee on a quarterly basis.

X. Publications

The Secretariat publishes:

A publication that should be published as frequently as possible. It is desirable that all newspapers published by organizations affiliated to the IWA or sympathising with it, should reserve a special space on its pages for information from the IWA, for calls for international solidarity and for general propaganda.

Propaganda leaflets, aimed principally at where our movement does not have any national affiliate organization.

All other publications, periodical or not, that the Congress may decide.